

*Abstract of the Disclosure*

The present invention encompasses a method and apparatus for detecting and characterizing one or more ingress events in the return band and creating a time/frequency map based on the detection of the ingress events. The time/frequency map is further characterized by marking frequency bands with ingress level above a predetermined threshold with a "1". The time/frequency time map may be used to determine when and which return frequency band has exceeded a predetermined threshold, and to distinguish between a narrowband ingress event and a wideband ingress event. When such characterization has been made, the return path may be attenuated or disconnected at a communications gateway device located at or substantially near the subscriber location. By disconnecting the return path or attenuating the return path signal at or near the subscriber location, the ingress may be reduced and locations which are the cause of severe ingress may be effectively isolated. This allows for a high degree of reliability to be maintained on the return path, and ensures that the critical services such as cable telephony may be provided with increased customer satisfaction.